

## 346 FLYING U'S LAST STAND

gether. He knew about the moon. Doctor Dell had explained to him how it just kept going round and round the world and you saw it when it came up over the edge. That was how Santa Claus found out if kids were good; he lived in the moon, and it went round and round so he could look down and see if you were bad. The Kid rubbed the tears off his cheeks with his palm, so that Santa Claus could not see that he had been crying. After that he rode bravely, with a consciously straight spine, because Santa Claus was looking at him all the time and he must be a rell ole cowpuncher.

After a long while the way grew less rough, and Silver trotted down the easier slopes. The Kid was pretty tired now. He held on by the horn of his saddle so Silver would not jolt him so much. He was terribly hungry, too, and his eyes kept going shut. But Santa Claus kept looking at him to see if he were a dead game sport, so he did not cry any more. He wished he had some grub in a sack, but he thought he must be nearly home now. He had come a terribly far ways since he ran away from that pilgrim who was going to cut off his ears.

The Kid was so sleepy and so tired that he almost fell out of the saddle once when Silver, who had been loping easily across a fairly level stretch of ground, slowed abruptly to negotiate a washout crossing. He